The Art of Looking Back and the Reward of More or Less Being Seen

The danger is in pleasing an immediate public: the immediate public
that comes around you and takes you in and accepts you and gives you success and everything. Instead of that, you should wait for fifty years or a hundred years for your true public. That is the only
public that interests me.

Marcel Duchamp

It is the REGARDEURS who make the pictures.

Marcel Duchamp

click to enlarge



Figure 1
Jasper Johns, *The Critic Sees*, 1961

Our ability to believe our eyes is often overridden by our unquestioning confidence in the judgment of “experts”. As in Jasper John’s The *Critic Sees*(Fig. 1), we seem to put more trust in the words of these experts whose insights are often the reiteration of yet others’ conclusions, than in our own ability to bear down and witness what is before us. Marcel

Duchamp understood the human tendency to categorize and simplify as well as rely on the filters of contemporary opinion to color observation; I believe he used this knowledge to make a powerful commentary on the state of affairs of modern thought and the direction that art was taking in his lifetime. Duchamp fought quietly against the move in twentieth century art towards the purely visual experience, the 'retinal shudder' as he put it, where "aesthetic delectation depends almost exclusively upon the sensitivity of the retina without any auxiliary interpretation."[1] This auxiliary interpretation was to Duchamp the operation of the intellect in making and understanding art. Duchamp rejected the Matissean and later the related Greenbergian theoretical view that saw art in terms of expression and taste rather than concept. As a result, Duchamp sought to transform his art and its appreciation into an intellectual endeavor that would restore it's ties "with society" by once again including "the religious, philosophical and moral content that bonded the two together."[2]

I believe it was this multi-dimensional conceptual stance on art, investigations into the wonder of human perception and a drive to subvert the art world's digestive cycle, rather than a Dada prankster spirit, that may in part have motivated Duchamp to design and handcraft his ready-mades and thereafter claim them to be found objects as recent discoveries suggest. The litany of contradictory statements regarding their provenance and the mysterious loss or destruction of the original ready-mades denying any close inspection stood as a challenge to his generation as it continues to be to ours to look not just through the glasses of contemporary interpretation but to have confidence in the complexity of our own mind's eye and what it can discern. Calvin Tomkins quotes and paraphrases Duchamp from an interview he gave to promote the Société Anonyme in 1920 as follows: If Americans would simply remember their own "far famed…sense of humor when they

see our pictures," he added, and think for themselves instead of listening to the critics, "modern art will come into its own."[3]

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Figure 2
Marcel Ducahmp,
Wanted: $2,000 Reward, 1922 © 2000 Succession Marcel Duchamp, ARS, N.Y./ADAGP, Paris

In *Wanted: $2000 Reward* (Fig. 2) Duchamp puts a price on this challenge and offers not only monetary compensation but seemingly a clear set of clues to any who wish to question accepted interpretations and jump beyond retinal readings of this and his other works. Today we know through the research primarily of Rhonda Roland Shearer and a growing number of others that the ready-mades and rectified ready-mades such as L.H.O.O.Q.[4] and*Apollinaire Enameled*[5] were not purely operations of choice by the artist but in fact highly manipulated wholly original works.

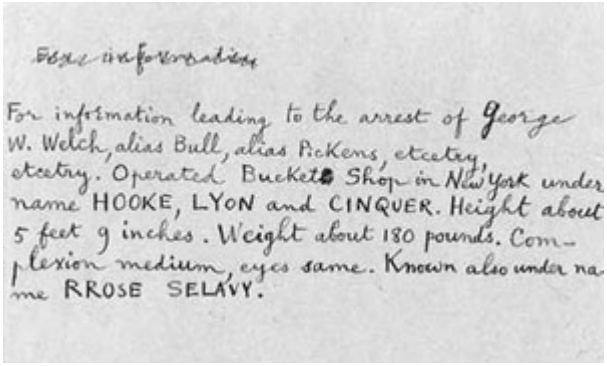
Wanted: $2000 Reward of 1923 is traditionally classified as a

rectified readymade and “according to [Arturo] Schwarz this work, which is now lost, was made from a joke poster Duchamp found in a New York restaurant. He attached his own photographs within two blank rectangles and had the last line of the lower text altered by a printer so that Rrose Selavy could be included in the list of aliases.”[6] It reads as follows:

For information leading to the arrest of George W. Welch , alias Bull, alias Pickens, etcetry, etcetry. Operated Bucket Shop in New York under name HOOKE, LYON, and CINQUER . Height about 5 feet 9 inches. Weight about 180 pounds. Complexion medium, eyes same. Known also under name RROSE SELAVY.

click images to enlarge

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- Figure 3
- Figure 4

- Marcel Ducahmp, Photograph of the original *Wanted* (1922) Poster, 1936 © 2000 Succession Marcel Duchamp, ARS, N.Y./ADAGP, Paris
- Marcel Duchamp, Photo of the handwritten transcription for *Wanted: $2,000 Reward*, 1938 © 2000 Succession Marcel Duchamp, ARS, N.Y./ADAGP, Paris

This work originally appeared sometime between 1922 and 1923 and later in 1938, when Duchamp used photos taken in 1936 of the original (Figs. 3, 4) to reconstruct it.[7] In 1963 Duchamp used *Wanted: $2,000 Reward* as the central image, a poster within a poster, for his first museum retrospective, *by or of Marcel Duchamp or Rrose Selavy* (fig.5). In the context of his retrospective, where 114 of his works were displayed,[8] we are left wondering why Duchamp sought to portray himself as a criminal. The implication being that the character pictured, Duchamp, has gotten away with something, the question is what? This analysis attempts to determine the nature of the crime as it was presented in the exhibition poster to spectators in Pasadena in 1963 and in doing so reveals that *Wanted: $2,000 Reward* may not be a simple rectified readymade but instead a wholly original work.

click images to enlarge



Figure 5
Marcel Duchamp, *A Poster Within a Poster*,
poster for "Marcel Duchamp: A Retrospective
Exhibition," Pasadena Art Museum, October 8 – November 3, 1963
©
2000 Succession Marcel Duchamp, ARS, N.Y./ADAGP, Paris

We know at least from *Genre Allegory (George Washington)* of 1943 that Duchamp is familiar with this well-known first President in American history though we cannot determine whether he was aware of him in 1923. If we assume that in the interval between his first arrival to the United States in 1915 and 1923 Duchamp learns of George Washington, we can then speculate that perhaps the middle initial "W" as in the common abbreviation GW, in the first sentence of *Wanted: $2000 Reward* is a stand in for Washington resulting in the proper name "George Washington Welch". I make this leap in considering simultaneously the proceeding word "*Welch*" and how it interacts with the name and mythology of George Washington. If we look up welch in Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary we find that it is a variation on Welsh a word already in usage by 1905, whose second entry means to break one's word:

Main Entry: welsh[9]
Pronunciation: ‘welsh, ‘welch
Function: *intransitive verb*
Etymology: probably from *Welsh*, adjective
Date: 1905
1 : to avoid payment — used with *on*
welched on his debts
2 : to break one’s word : RENEGE
welched on their promises
— ***welsh·er*** *noun*

click to enlarge



Figure 6
Marcel Duchamp, *Genre Allegory [George Washington]*, 1943 © 2000 Succession Marcel Duchamp, ARS, N.Y./ADAGP, Paris



Figure 7

Marcel Duchamp,
Self Portrait in Profile, Zinc template, 1957 © 2000 Succession Marcel Duchamp, ARS, N.Y./ADAGP, Paris



Figure 8
Marcel Duchamp,
With Hidden Noise (bottom), 1916 © 2000 Succession Marcel Duchamp,
ARS, N.Y./ADAGP, Paris

Thus, the noun “welch” after the name “Washington” disappoints our expectations as we are more likely to remember Washington for his virtue since his character is often defined by the well known story of the cherry tree and the famous line “I cannot tell a lie….” The juxtaposition of the symbolism surrounding “George Washington” and the definition of “Welch” yields a construction such as virtue-purity (George Washington) reneged-broken (Welch). If we apply this notion of purity to the readymades, since after all they demonstrate that choice is the purest possible artistic expression, we begin to realize the significance of the concept “purity reneged.” This occurs only if we accept that compelling evidence today reveals that the ready-mades such as *In advance of a Broken Arm* (1915) or *Hat Rack* (1917)[(10)] are not the operation of pure choice but cleverly crafted to appear as if hand selected industrially produced objects. An additional interpretation of ‘George W Welch’ transposes the persona of a dishonest Washington directly to Duchamp himself (Figs.6, 7), where we can see that perhaps Duchamp wishes to portray the

nature of his crime through the characterization of a virtuous or honest artist/leader that has broken his word. With either reading already we sense a theme of deception.

This theme continues in the same sentence with the use of the words *alias* and *etcetry* visually linked by repetition and their appearance in lowercase. The word *alias* is significant when the proper English pronunciation “el – e – as” is mildly re-stressed, resulting in the sound “a – lie- as.” The beginning “a” sound disappears completely when the two aliases are pronounced in succession, the resulting sound yields – lies, lies. The second set of repeated words in lowercase letters in this sentence is “etcetry, etcetry.” The word “etcetry” is a playful variation of et cetera spoken with a southern drawl, signifying others of the same kind, but if we look at it as a French homophone it takes on new meaning. I should note that Duchamp was deeply interested in the writings of Raymond Roussel dating back to 1912 and particularly in his word play[(11)] that was based on a system of slightly distorted homophones.[(12)] Also, we see in other works such as *With Hidden Noise* (Fig. 8) of 1916 that Duchamp already easily jumps between French and English. Therefore it is not a great leap to transform *etcetry* into “et c’est [le] tri” the final *try*(pronounced: tree) perfectly correlating with *tri*, the participle of the verb *trier* in French. Le Grand Robert dictionary of the French language gives a definition of this verb and dates its first appearance in the language:

> TRIER v. tr. — V. 1160; p.e. bas lat. Tritarebroyer , du class. terere, parce qu’ on broie le grain pour en separer les parties inutilisables 1. Choisir parmi d’autres; extraire d’un plus grand nombre, après examen. *Trier des semences une a une. Ouvrier qui trie les assiettes sans defaut. Trier les homes propres au service*. Selectionner.- Trier des graines sur le volet. — Au fig. Choisir en operant une selection tres stricte. *On restreint le nombre des nouveaux arrivants, on les trie sur le volet*[13].

The translation from French to English for *trier* is to sort, select, pick or hand pick.[14] The resulting phrase “et c’est [le] tri” translates to the English “and it is [the] sorting” or “and it is [the] choosing”. Now, if we combine the lowercase words alias and *etcetry* linked by their proximity, repetition and lowercase status in the sentence we arrive at the phrase “lies and it is [the] choosing, lies and it is [the] choosing” or “lies, lies, and it is [the] choosing, and it is [the] choosing.” As in the case of George Washington Welch, the theme of deception emerges from the text in *Wanted: $2000 Reward*. In this example an allusion to the ready-mades, defined as objects “elevated to the status of art by the mere act of the artist’s selection,”[15] may surface as the act of selection is directly addressed by the use of *trier*while simultaneously the definition of the ready-mades as a process of selection is put to question by prefacing the act with the notion of lying. As we will see, the next example reiterates this emerging theme of false choices.

In the same sentence we find the proper names “Bull” and

“Pickens” thematically connected by the use of capital letters. Other than the large male farm animal, “Bull” signifies a falsehood or a down-right lie in a colloquial sense, as in the common expression “that’s a load of bull.” The next word “Pickens” is the southern drawl equivalent of “pickings” from which one need not go far to arrive at its synonym, “choices [selections]”. When these two words are combined the result is “Bull Pickens [Pickings]” or ” false choices [selections].” In light of the previous two examples and in the context of the ready-mades this example also seems to challenge the authenticity of the ready-mades as everyday objects raised to the status of art solely through an artist’s choice.

The following sentence – “Operated Bucket Shop in New York under name HOOKE, LYON, and CINQUER” – may further the theme of deception in connection to the ready-mades. First, we should take note of Duchamp’s use of “Operated” at the beginning of this sentence since he often uses the term “operation” when referring to processes surrounding the ready-mades. An example appears in one of his notes in the *The Green Box* that states,” to separate the mass-produced ready-made from the ready found – the separation is an*operation*.”[16] A definition for “bucket shop” from Merriam Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary a term that dates back to 1875, aids in addressing the remainder of the sentence:

> Main Entry: bucket shop[17]
> Function: *noun*
> Date: 1875
> 1 – : a saloon in which liquor was formerly sold from or dispensed in open containers (as buckets or pitchers)
> 2 -a- : a gambling establishment that formerly used market fluctuations (as in securities or commodities) as a basis for gaming b- : a dishonest brokerage firm; *especially* : one that formerly failed to execute customers’ margin orders in expectation of making a profit from market fluctuations adverse to the customers’ interests.

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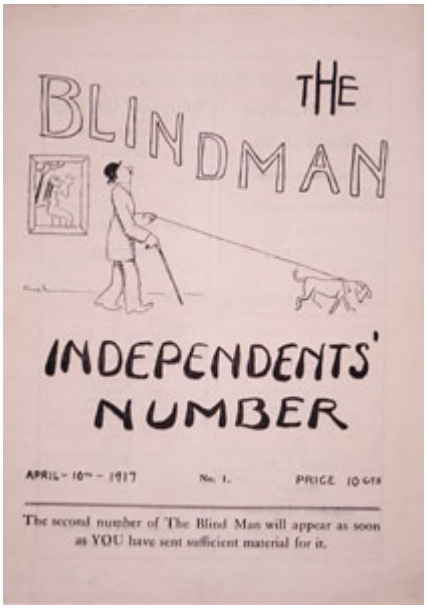


Figure 9
Marcel Duchamp, *The Blind Man*, no. 1,
1917 © 2000 Succession Marcel Duchamp,
ARS, N.Y./ADAGP, Paris

The operator of a bucket shop thus capitalizes on the gullibility and blindness of individuals to see that they are being taken (Fig. 9). A successful sale requires that the customer take the bait as the expression goes, “hook, line and sinker” a homophone derived from the aliases HOOKE, LYON and CINQUER appearing at the end of the sentence. Duchamp then, may see himself in New York as the operator of a bucket shop of sorts where questionable gaming or brokering may translate literally to his not following art world rules. From the “dishonesty” of claiming the ready-mades, a product of the artist’s choice, to the eventual signing of inaccurate versions of the ready-mades Duchamp’s actions become the equivalent of selling margin orders for profit adverse to customers’ interests or when put into the art context, the audience’s expectations. By delivering an inaccurate story to his immediate audience, Duchamp drives the figurative ‘HOOKE’

deeper and with every passing generation his “crime of deception” quietly fades from view, as the surrogates he happily signs[18] become the “sign” for the lost originals. Through the proliferation of the photographic documentation of these over time he virtually replaces the few smoking gun originals that nevertheless co-exist, as those in the*Box in the Valise* of 1941. In 1963 around the time of the Pasadena retrospective, Teeny [Duchamp] describes Marcel Duchamp’s reaction to Richard Hamilton’s article for *Art International* as making Duchamp feel “transparent… as some fish are, showing their bones and everything.” [19] In it Hamilton writes:

Duchamp has busied himself for many years in the propagation of his achievements thorough the media of printed reproductions and certified copies so that now we begin to accept the substitute as the work. I certainly fell in the well-laid trap so thoroughly that I boasted of knowing what he had done without ever having seen more than a few things in the flesh…[20]

Indeed up until a few years ago, our reading of Duchamp’s oeuvre had long ago shifted from direct observation to glimpses at inaccurate versions of the ready-mades and the reiterated voices of what the critics saw and see as Jasper John’s cast sculpture reveals so eloquently. Even early on, though, there were murmurs that may have pointed at the “deception.” André Breton, founder of the surrealists and friend of Duchamp, may have made allusions to it in the publication Minotaure from 1935:

Marcel Duchamp’s journey through the artistic looking glass determines a fundamental crisis of painting and sculpture which reactionary maneuvers and stock-exchange brokerages will not be able to conceal much longer.[21]

I wonder still if Breton’s mention of reactionary maneuvers and stock-exchange brokerages is a direct reference to

Duchamp's bucket shop bait and switch strategy of signing his name to copies of lost ready-mades or simply to moves in the art world in the 1930s. In 1964 the "deception" was questioned again when Alfred Barr challenged Duchamp's concept of indifference in selecting the ready-mades at a panel discussion at MOMA by asking "why do they look so beautiful today?" Duchamp answered,"Nobody's perfect."[22]

Perhaps the imperfection was always intended; perhaps the fugitive pictured in *Wanted: $2,000 Reward* wants to get caught, just not immediately. The remaining text in *Wanted: $2,000 Reward* seems more descriptive than cryptic describing a set of physical attributes following the convention of wanted type posters. Other than the well-known homophone RROSE SELAVY, Duchamp's female alter ego first appearing in 1920, which when pronounced in French yields "Eros, c'est la vie" or in English, "Eros, [that] is life," this final text appears barren of secondary meanings. It seems simply to function as a delay in the capture of the "criminal" by misdirecting our attention and keeping us from challenging the "official story" of *Wanted: $2,000 Reward*.

But does it really end there? If we continue looking for further wordplay relating to the ready-mades we could read "Height" as its equivalent in French, "Hauteur" a homonym for*auteur* that translates to the English *author* followed by the numbers 5 and 9 correlating to feet and inches. Could these instead be an approximation of the number of important ready-mades 'about' 14 that Duchamp 'authored' and wishes to be measured against? And could 'Weight' be a homonym for "Wait" or *delay*, a concept Duchamp explored from his subtitling the *Large Glass* of 1923 *delay in glass,*[23] to the various delays in the publication of his notes, to his posthumous unveiling of *Etant Donnes* in 1969 to our present delayed further understanding of his works? If we continue to translate measures, could we take the 180 lbs. in the context of delay and translate it to the French kilogram and end up

with 81.81(repeating), Duchamp's age at death. This number also roughly matches the number of years in delay from the unveiling of the first well known ready-made, *Fountain* of 1917, to our present understanding that it along with the other ready-mades were more than simply operations of choice. Indeed this particular delay brings us to a time in history when we can finally asses the true "weight" of his oeuvre, particularly when we recall that he was willing to wait fifty or a hundred years for his ideal audience. And if as they say, "time is money" can we translate the $2,000 or 2K from money to years and mark our time and ourselves as the arrival of his much 'wanted' ideal audience?

Many of these last observations, I realize, may be marred with conjecture but I offer them to raise the question of intentionality in reading Duchamp's work. When is one over reading or misinterpreting the work and when are certain connections justified? When our readings turn up incredible results we are left to wonder whether it is just our imagination or if it is possible for one man to juggle simultaneously such a vast amount of multiplicity of meaning.

Whether he could, could not or did should be debated and in terms of *Wanted: $2000 Reward* the apparent references to lies, choices and the ready-mades should be central to the discussion. To answer the question of intentionality I believe it is important first to attempt to find a version of the original joke poster, if there ever existed one. If the search turns up an original then the argument is settled and Duchamp simply found an extremely appropriate ready-made in 1923 and modified it slightly.

click to enlarge



Figure 10
Marcel Duchamp, *Boite-en-valise (The Box in a Valise)*, folder 9, 1941 © 2000 Succession Marcel Duchamp, ARS, N.Y./ADAGP, Paris

On the other hand, if there is no evidence of such a poster then this analysis may aid in re-defining*Wanted: $2000 Reward* as one amongst the growing group of highly layered handcrafted works originally classified as ready-mades, rectified ready-mades, and assisted ready-mades to name a few of Duchamp's designations. From urinal to snow shovel present findings consistently demonstrate that Duchamp may have never settled for simple choice, though he went to great pains to make it appear so. There are many inconsistencies surrounding *Wanted: $2,000 Reward*that point to this being the case. For one, *Wanted: $2,000 Reward* is grouped in Duchamp's portable museum, *Box in a Valise* of 1941 (Fig.10), with three other works including L.H.O.O.Q. that has now convincingly been proven by Rhonda Roland Shearer to be a deftly refinished photo composite of Duchamp's face and the Mona Lisa's instead of a cheap chromo reproduction of the Gioconda as the "official story" claims.[(24)] The other two works in the grouping, *Tzanck Check* (1919) and *Obligation de Monte Carlo* (1924), both known to be handcrafted surrogates of actual documents, classified as imitated rectified ready-mades. It seems, therefore, implausible in terms of the grouping in the Box and in the broader context of the other handmade ready-mades that Duchamp would include such a simple slightly altered found object in

his oeuvre. And furthermore, it is difficult to imagine a self-described meticulous man keenly aware of his place in history and moreover the workings of posterity choosing what overtly looks like a slightly altered playful “joke” as the attraction to his most important exhibition.[25] Other incongruities remain, such as the many homophonic allusions and particularly those that jump from English to French, a trademark in Duchamp’s punning. Would a New York joke poster writer, writing for an English speaking audience in the 1920s pun in French? And finally, can the correlation with present knowledge of false ready-mades be ignored in light of the apparent repeated references to deception and selection in *Wanted: $2,000 Reward* as deciphered in this essay?

As the body of evidence grows and demonstrates Duchamp’s ability and wish to visually layer his works in terms of multiplicity of viewpoints and simultaneity of meaning then it follows that he may have pursued similar ends in works like *Wanted: $2,000 Reward* that focus on the dimension of language. Duchamp puts it best:

I like words in a poetic sense. Puns for me are like rhymes … for me, words are not merely a means of communication. You know, puns have always been considered a low form of wit, but I find them a source of stimulation both because of their actual sound and because of unexpected meanings attached to the interrelationship of disparate words. For me, this is an infinite field of joy and it’s always right at hand. Sometimes four or five different levels of meaning come through.[26]

If we take Duchamp at his word in this instance, we hear clearly that he not only can arrive at multiple meanings (up to four or five levels) but also enjoys bending language in the manner this deciphering of *Wanted: $2,000 Reward* proposes he may have done.

To end I want to add one last possible reference to the ready-

mades and the meaning of art in general found in the title of the piece, WANTED, printed in bold red block lettering at the top of the poster. The connection comes when we think of the reason for wanted posters in the first place.

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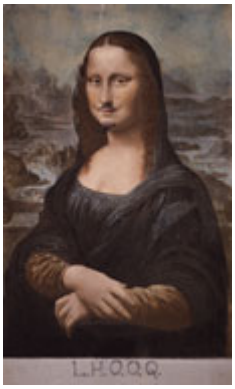


Figure 11
Marcel Duchamp, *L.H.O.O.Q.*,
1919 © 2000 Succession Marcel Duchamp,
ARS, N.Y./ADAGP, Paris

click to enlarge



Figure 12
Marcel Duchamp, *L.H.O.O.Q.*

Shaved, 1965 © 2000 Succession
Marcel Duchamp, ARS, N.Y./ADAGP,
Paris

Wanted posters are meant to activate looking in the eventual hope of finding. As when we "L.H.O.O.Q." [read: LOOK] closely in 1919 and find Marcel Duchamp where the Mona Lisa should be and "rasée" [read: re-see] in 1965(Figs.11,12) that he has gone again,[27]then perhaps in *Wanted: $2000 Reward*, Marcel Duchamp affords us another chance to find him out and in the process of re-discovery we end up claiming our reward: a way back to an active role in the appreciation of art that involves not only looking with our eyes but also with our imagination and the full capacity of our intellect or as Jasper Johns describes "through the retinal boundaries which had been established with Impressionism into a field where language, thought and vision act upon one another."[28] And, if we accept this role, in the end we become artists in a sense as our readings – what we choose to see – become the true ready-mades found again in the wake of their disappearance.[29] After all, *tout-fait* (ready-made) is a homophone for *tu fait* (you make).[30]

> A ready-made is a work of art without an artist to make it.
> Marcel Duchamp, 1963

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Marvin Lazarus, Retouched
photograph of Duchamp with moustache and goatee drawn on his face
at the 1961 “Assemblages” exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art
© 2000 Succession Marcel Duchamp, ARS, N.Y./ADAGP, Paris

Notes

Footnote Return 1. Ades, Dawn; Cox, Niel; Hopkins, David. *Marcel Duchamp*. London: Thames and Hudson, 1999, p. 71.

Footnote Return 2. Ades, p. 71.

Footnote Return 3. Tomkins, Calvin. *Duchamp, A Biography*. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1996, p. 226.

Footnote Return 4. Follow this link to read compelling evidence in Rhonda Roland Shearer’s scientific discoveries that reveal the ready-mades are not.

Footnote Return 5. Follow this hyperlink to see more evidence by Rhonda Roland Shearer that points to unexpected dimensions in Duchamp's art.

Footnote Return 6. Joselit, David. *Infinite Regress, Marcel Duchamp 1910-1914*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT, 1998, p.108.

Footnote Return 7. Bonk, Ecke. *Marcel Duchamp, The Box in a Valise*. New York: Rizzoli, 1989, p. 243.

Footnote Return 8. D'Harnoncourt, Anne; McShine, Kynaston (eds.). *Marcel Duchamp*. Munich: Prestel, 1989, p. 28. Walter Hopps organized the exhibition held at the Pasadena Art Museum between October 8 and November 9, 1963. Duchamp designed the poster and catalog cover for the exhibition.

Footnote Return 9. *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*, 10th ed., 1999, Merriam-Webster, Incorporated. "Welch" is a variation of "welsh." To confirm the existence and match the definition to the era, I have verified in a 1920 copy of Webster's New International Dictionary that the definition is consistent with its use in the analysis. I have chosen to use the updated version because the tenth edition includes the sense of the word in the 1920s but also gives a more nuanced definition as well as provides the date of its first appearance in the English language.

Footnote Return 10. Rhonda Roland Shearer convincingly demonstrates that both of these ready-mades are not simple found objects. In the case of *In Advance of a Broken Arm*, the meeting of the arm to the shovelhead is so fragile that the shovel would break at the neck if used to shovel snow. Furthermore, the shovel scoop is unsupported in the back, thus

making it flimsy and unusable as a surface for shoveling. The *Hat Rack* is equally problematic as a real object as it appears in *The Box in a Valise* reproduction as an asymmetrical five hooked impossible looking construction. This differs greatly from subsequent versions (i.e. Schwarz) that offer six symmetrical hooks. Follow this link to read about these discoveries in more detail.

Footnote Return 11. Follow this link to read more about Duchamp's word play. Through a collection of excellent examples this article by Steven Jay Gould extensively explores, deciphers and catalogues many of Duchamp's creative uses of language.

Footnote Return 12. Ades, p. 109.

Footnote Return 13. *Le Grand Robert de la Langue Francaise*, Deuxieme Edition copyright © 1985 by Dictionnaires Le Robert, Paris.

Footnote Return 14. *The Collins Robert French Dictionary*, 1995, New York: HarperCollins, Paris: Dictionnaires Le Robert. I should point out that *trier* comes from the Latin *tritare* whose French synonym is *broyer*, to grind as appears in the definition of *trier* in Le Robert. This connection is difficult to overlook when we consider that Duchamp focuses on the grinding and milling process in three other works, his Chocolate Grinder (Broyeuse de Chocolat) of 1913, *Coffee Mill (Moulin a Café)* 1911 and *Glider Containing a Water Mill in Neighboring Metals* of 1913-15. Furthermore, both the *Chocolate Grinder* and the *Water Mill* reappear as central images in the *Large Glass* of 1923. The process of selection as a sorting out of useful and useless ("qu'on broie le grain pour en separer les parties inutilisables") as well as a generating force (*Water Mill*) may point to a theme in the *Large Glass* centering

on the creative process itself particularly in terms of idea generation [water mill], filtering [sieves], and whole to parts [grinder].

Footnote Return 15. Naumann, Francis. *Marcel Duchamp, The Art of Making Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*. New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc, 1999, p. 299.

Footnote Return 16. Ades, p. 155.

Footnote Return 17. Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, 10th edition, 1999, Merriam-Webster, Incorporated. To confirm the existence and match the definition to the era, I have verified in a 1920 copy of Webster's New International Dictionary that the definition is consistent with its use in the analysis. I have chosen to use the updated version because the tenth edition gives a fuller definition outlining the history of the expression as well as providing the date of its first appearance in the English language.

Footnote Return 18. Incidentally, Duchamp signed these copies with the inscription "pour copie conforme," re-written as a homophone in English it yields "poor copy con for me". By "poor copy" Duchamp may be referring to the growing evidence (by Rhonda Roland Shearer) that the ready-mades are impossible objects whose construction in three dimensions is quite simply impossible since the lost originals, now only seen in photo form, appear to be composite images comprising multiple viewpoints spliced to form one coherent image. The "con for me" reference may thus point to the notion that with every new manifestation of an incorrect three dimensional version of a readymade we grow blinder to the discrepancies in the originals thus the new version serves to support Duchamp's ruse and thus the con [is made] for him.

Footnote Return 19. Naumann, p. 235.

Footnote Return 20. Ibid.

Footnote Return 21. André Breton from Nauman, p.161.

Footnote Return 22. Tomkins, p. 427.

Footnote Return 23. Joselit, p.143.

Footnote Return 24. d'Harnoncourt, p. 289.

Footnote Return 25. In Tomkins, p. 445, Duchamp discusses with the author in 1964 the roughly fifty year cycles that scientific ideas go through before being replaced by newer ideas that challenge everything before them. He also touches on humor as follows: I never could stand the seriousness of life, but when the serious is tinted with humor, it makes a nicer color. Duchamp further explains his position on posterity in 1952 in Bonk, p. 18, from a conversation with Suzanne Duchamp and Jean Crotti: "Artists of all times are like the gamblers of Monte Carlo, and this blind lottery allows some to succeed and ruins others. In my opinion, neither the winners nor the losers are worth worrying about. Everything happens through pure luck. Posterity is a real bitch who cheats some, reinstates others (El Greco) and reserves the right to change her mind every 50 years."

Footnote Return 26. Marcel Duchamp, quoted from: Kuenzli, Rudolf and Francis M. Naumann (eds.). *Marcel Duchamp, Artist of the Century*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT, 1989, p. 6.

Footnote Return 27. Follow this hyperlink to see the hide and seek Wilson-Lincoln effect illustrated. For Duchamp, the ephemeral nature as well as the relativistic aspect of perception may be central to his oeuvre, where the theme of “now you see it, now you don’t” constantly surfaces. This is consistent with the frustration of trying to grasp multiple viewpoints/meanings simultaneously in Duchamp’s work both with his puns as well as the “impossible ready-mades.”

Footnote Return 28. Johns, Jasper. “Marcel Duchamp (1887-1968),” *Artforum* 7, no. 3. (November 1968), p. 6.

Footnote Return 29. Tomkins, p. 397. Duchamp speaks of the artist’s role: the creative act is not performed by the artist alone. The spectator brings the work in contact with the external world by deciphering and interpreting its inner qualifications and thus adds his contribution to the creative act.

Footnote Return 30. Special thanks to Monsieur André Gervais whose comments during the writing of this article have strengthened the final result.